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AUTHOR Evans, Helen, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

Intended to supplement the textbook series "Houghton Mifflin English Grammar and Composition" and to offer students and classroom teachers in the secondary schools a review of research writing, this guide outlines a step-by-step process allowing for thorough student comprehension and comfort with the application of basic research and writing skills. The table of contents reflects the series of steps involved in this process: (1) select a topic; (2) write a thesis statement; (3) make an outline; (4) research the subject; (5) record sources on "works cited" cards; (6) take notes; (7) write a rough draft; (8) use parenthetical references for documentation; (9) list the works cited; and (10) revise, proofread, and write the final paper. A sample cover page, outline, research paper, and works cited list are included. A list of correlations of curriculum to Texas Essential Elements for Library/Information Skills for grades 6, 7, 8, and 9-12 conclude the guide. (SR)

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RESEARCH WRITING GUIDE

Write a Research Paper

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One Step at a Time

Write a Research Paper

One Step at a Time

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Write a Research Paper

One Step at a Time

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Developed by
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1988
Content Revision - Helen Evans
Illustrations - Alice Robledo

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PREFACE

The purpose of this research writing guide is to offer students and classroom teachers in the secondary schools a review of the research writing process. The step-by-step approach to research writing allows for thorough student comprehension and comfort with the application of basic research and writing skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The previous research writing guide Steps to Success: Writing the Research Paper was developed by the Media Specialists in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District. The new research writing guide, Write a Research Paper One Step at a Time contains updated and revised material with adjustments in format and content to incorporate current research techniques.

Write a Research Paper One Step at a Time supplements the units on writing research papers in the textbook series Houghton Mifflin English Grammar and Composition and is based on the latest edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (1984) published by the Modern Language Association and A Guide to MLA Documentation Style for Research Papers (1988) published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

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Step 1 - Select a Topic

Select a topic that interests you or one that has been suggested by your teacher.

Narrow the topic if it is too broad.

TOO BROAD	NARROWED
Indians	Sioux Indians
Famous Explorers	Magellan
History of the U.S.	California Gold Rush
Telecommunications	Fiber Optics

Read information in the encyclopedia if you are unfamiliar with your topic. Reading about the topic will help you decide on two or three good subtopics.

Step 2 - Write a Thesis Statement

▶ Write a preliminary **thesis statement** in one good sentence that summarizes the content of your planned report.

- The thesis statement will include the **main topic** and two or three **subtopics.**

MAIN TOPIC	The real existence of Scotland's Loch Ness monster has been neither proved nor disproved, but
THREE SUBTOPICS	the history of the legend, past expeditions to Loch Ness, and discoveries made by explorers to the area
PART OF MAIN TOPIC	continue to arouse interest in the validity of the monster's existence.

Step 3 - Make an Outline

- Make a working **outline** to help direct your research.
- Indicate **subtopics** on your outline by using Roman numerals.
  - Arrange the subtopics in **chronological order** (time order) or **order of importance** with the most important one stated last.

THESIS STATEMENT: The real existence of Scotland's Loch Ness monster has been neither proved nor disproved, but an inquiry into the history of the legend, past expeditions to Loch Ness, and discoveries made by explorers to the area continue to arouse interest in the validity of the monster's existence.

I. Introduction

II. History of the Loch Ness Monster

- A. Legends about monsters
- B. Earliest sightings of the monster at Loch Ness
- C. Photographs of Nessie

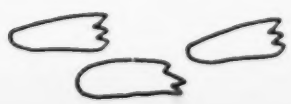
III. Expeditions to Loch Ness

- A. Diving expeditions to Loch Ness
- B. First descriptions of the monster
- C. Later drawings of the monster

IV. Discoveries made by explorers

- A. Discovery of caves
- B. Theory that creatures might live in caves
- C. Explanation of dark waters of Loch Ness

V. Conclusion



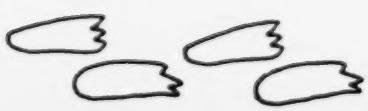
Step 4 - Research the Topic

▶ Use a variety of **sources** to acquire information about your topic.

Books	Newspapers
Encyclopedias	Vertical Files
Filmstrips and Tapes	SIRS (Source within a Source)
Interviews	NewsBank
Magazines	DIALOG

▶ Locate **information** to support your subtopics.

- Remember to use *Tables of Contents*, *Indexes*, and *Glossaries* to help in finding pertinent information.
- Skim and scan the available information.
- Pay attention to the topic sentences of paragraphs as you read.

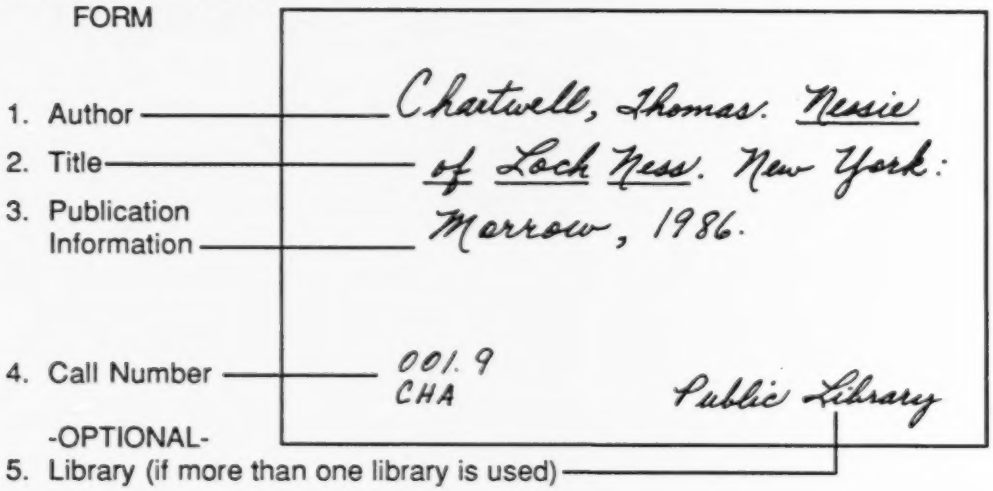


Step 5 - Record Sources on Works Cited Cards

▶ Record the sources from which you will take notes for your research paper on **works cited cards**.

- Include all information on the work cited card needed to identify each source you use.
- Use the correct form and punctuation for each type of source you use. (See examples given on pages 5a-5c.)

WORK CITED CARD FORM



FORMAT EXAMPLES FOR WORKS CITED

Begin at the left-hand margin for the first line of information. Indent five spaces on succeeding lines to continue the information for the same entry.

Book with one author:

Chartwell, Thomas. Nessie of Loch Ness. New York: Morrow, 1986.

Book with two or more authors:

Snyder, Gene, and Ellen Anderson. The Search for a Legend. New York: Doubleday, 1987.

Book compiled by an editor:

Colby, Samuel, ed. Ten Famous Mysteries and Monsters. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1985.

Book without an author:

Unexplained Mysteries. New York: Random, 1986.

Book in a series:

Hunt, Seth. Underwater Monsters. Fact or Fiction Series 2. London: Oxford, 1986.

Encyclopedia article with an author:

Mackal, Roy P. "Loch Ness Monster." World Book Encyclopedia. 1986 ed.

Encyclopedia article without an author:

"Sea Serpent." Encyclopedia Americana. 1986 ed.

Magazine article with an author:

Gregory, William K. "The Loch Ness Monster." Natural History Jan. 1987: 130-131.

Magazine article without an author:

"The Search Continues at Loch Ness." Time 5 Oct. 1987: 24+.

Newspaper article with an author:

Craig, Glenn. "The Search for Nessie Continues." New York Times 21 Nov. 1987, late ed.: B17.

Newspaper article without an author:

"Searchers Continue Looking for Nessie." New York Times 23 Oct. 1986, late ed.: C5.

NewsBank article:

Foster, Geraldine. "Do Muddy Waters of Loch Ness Hide Nessie?" (San Francisco, California) Examiner 20 Jan. 1987. NewsBank, Environment, 1987, fiche 3 grid G2.

Interview in person:

Cousteau, Jacques. Personal interview. 25 July 1987.

Interview by telephone:

Cousteau, Jacques. Telephone interview. 9 Sept. 1987.

SIRS article:

Calder, Rene. "Lake Pollution and Endangered Species." Science 9 Oct. 1985: 10-14. Reprinted in Pollution Vol. 1. Ed. Eleanor C. Goldstein. Boca Raton, FL: Social Issues Resources, Inc., 1986. Article 36.

DIALOG material:

Mason, Mary Moore. "Scotland's Elusive Nessie." Travel-Holiday July 1987: 94. DIALOG file 47, item 05107409.

Pamphlet:

Separate Fact from Fiction. Princeton: Princeton U, 1986.

Lecture:

Rankin, John. "Is the Loch Ness Monster a Hoax?" Museum of Fine Arts. Houston, 5 Aug. 1986.

Film, Filmstrip, Slide Program, Videotape:

Following the Trail of Nessie. Dir. Joseph Samuels. Walt Disney, 1985.

Television Program:

"Tracking the Loch Ness Monster." Science World. Created by Cheryl Trent. Dir. Tom Trent. PBS. KUHT, Houston. 24 Mar. 1986.

Work of Art

Land, Scott. Shores of Loch Ness. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Step 6 - Take Notes

- Refer to your thesis statement and outline to be sure all information you use is closely related to the main topic and subtopics.
- Take notes on index cards.
  - **Summarize**, **quote directly**, or **paraphrase** the information.
- Use the **note card guidelines** which follow:
  - Write a subject heading on the top line of each card.
  - Write the last name of the author and an abbreviated title of the source.
  - Write only on the front of the card.
  - Write only one idea on each card.
  - Write the page number(s) from which you took the information.

NOTE CARD FORM

1. Subject Heading
2. Author & Title
3. Note
4. Page Reference

Myths and Legends Chartwell, Nessie

Every nation in the world has its myths and legends about monsters. Stories have been told about monsters that have roamed the local countryside for centuries. These stories have come down to us both by word of mouth and through books.

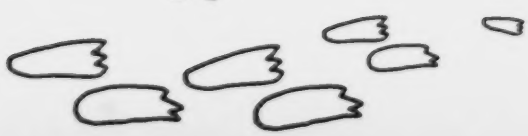
17

Step 7 - Write a Rough Draft

- Revise your preliminary thesis statement if necessary.
- Sort your note cards according to the subject headings.
- Prepare a detailed outline using your note cards.
- Write an **introductory paragraph** to introduce your subject.
  - Begin the paragraph with general information about the subject in two or three sentences.
  - End the paragraph with your thesis statement.

GENERAL INFORMATION	For hundreds of years in every country throughout the world, people have told stories about monsters on land or in the sea. Although many creatures were described as terrifying and destructive, some were seen as harmless. Scotland is one country made famous by tales of a large, yet harmless, creature.
THESIS STATEMENT	The real existence of Scotland's Loch Ness monster has been neither proved nor disproved, but an inquiry into the history of the legend, past expeditions to Loch Ness, and discoveries made by explorers to the area continue to arouse interest in the validity of the monster's existence.

- Write the **body of the paper** (paragraphs II, III, and IV), developing each heading on the outline by using the information on your note cards.
- Write a **concluding paragraph** which reviews the main parts of your paper and shows that you have proved your thesis statement.



Step 8 - Use Parenthetical References for Documentation

▶ Use **parenthetical references** to briefly, clearly, and accurately document each in text reference.

- Cite the author's last name and the page number(s) of the source in parentheses. (If the author is not given, use the first word of the title.)

> Artists and explorers pictured Nessie as a "giant salamander" (Gregory 130).

-OR-

- Use the author's name in your sentence and place only the page number(s) of the source in parentheses.

> William Gregory wrote, "More recent descriptions show Nessie as a combination of several reptiles and mammals" (130-131).

▶ Give the **complete citation** for the parenthetical references on your **works cited page.**

Step 9 - List the Works Cited

▶ Compile the list of **works cited** from the information on your works cited cards.

- Arrange the cards in alphabetical order by the authors' last names.
- Alphabetize the entry by the first word in the title if no author is given for the source. (Omit the words A, An, and The.)
- Use the same form and punctuation on the works cited page as used for the entries on the works cited cards. (See format examples on pages 5a-5c.)

Step 10 - Revise, Proofread, Write the Final Paper

▶ **Revise** your first draft.

- Read through the paper several times.
- Check for good organization as you refer to the outline.
- Check the unity and completeness of information in each section.
- Check the use of transitional words and phrases to make your paper coherent.
- Check your use of good word choices to express ideas.
- Check your sentence structures.

▶ **Proofread** your paper once more.

- Correct errors in grammar usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- Make sure your parenthetical references and works cited are correct.

▶ **Write** or type your finished paper.

- Include the following parts:

1. Title page
2. Outline
3. Written or typed paper
4. Works cited

TITLE OF PAPER

by

NAME OF STUDENT

SUBJECT AND GRADE

TEACHER

SCHOOL

DATE

The Loch Ness Monster

I. Introduction

II. History of the Loch Ness Monster

A. Legends about monsters

B. Earliest sightings of the monster at Loch Ness

C. Photographs of Nessie

III. Expeditions to Loch Ness

A. Diving expeditions to Loch Ness

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IV. Discoveries made by explorers

A. Discovery of caves

B. Theory that creatures might live in caves

C. Explanation of dark waters of Loch Ness

V. Conclusion

The Loch Ness Monster

For hundreds of years in every country throughout the world, people have told stories about monsters on land or in the sea. Although many creatures were described as terrifying and destructive, some were seen as harmless. Scotland is one country made famous by tales of a large yet harmless creature. The real existence of Scotland's Loch Ness monster has been neither proved nor disproved, but an inquiry into the history of the legend, past expeditions to Loch Ness, and discoveries made by explorers to the area continue to arouse interest in the validity of the monster's existence.

The history of Scotland's Loch Ness monster is filled with legends, sightings, and photographs. Nessie, as the monster is called, lives in a lake called Loch Ness. The earliest record of the monster appeared in the 500's. According to Thomas Chartwell, "Earliest records indicate the Loch Ness monster frequently surfaced to sun itself on the shores of Loch Ness" (21). More recent reports state that the monster has no interest in going onto shore. Nessie earned worldwide fame in the 1940's when someone claimed to have taken a picture of the monster. Since that time, descriptions of Nessie have agreed with one another (Loch 92).

Many expeditions have been made to Loch Ness in search of the monster. The earliest expeditions to Loch Ness resulted in strange descriptions of Nessie. Artists and explorers pictured Nessie as a "giant salamander" (Gregory 130). Later drawings revealed Nessie as a dragon-like monster. According to William Gregory, "More recent descriptions show Nessie as a combination of several reptiles and mammals" (130-131). Before the invention of the camera, people were satisfied with artists' sketches. Today, people are more likely to believe a photograph of Nessie than they are to believe a sketch. Most people, however, will believe that Nessie exists only if they see the monster first-hand. For this reason, diving expeditions have been sent to Loch Ness to hunt the monster and force it to the water's surface so others might see it. Even today, people sit patiently on the shores of Loch Ness waiting for Nessie to surface (Mason 94).

Although no expedition divers have actually seen a monster, Loch Ness explorers have made many important discoveries. For example, they have discovered huge caves below the surface of Loch Ness. Explorers to the area believe it is possible for a fish-like mammal of great size to live in the caves protected from the eyes of divers and the hooks of fishermen (Search 24). Expeditions to Loch Ness find the lake water very dark and rough. Some divers and members of expedition teams to Loch Ness theorize that a school of creatures might be responsible for the darkness and the roughness of the water as the giant creatures walk about on the muddy lake bottom or swim about just beneath the water's surface (Search 30). Activity of this magnitude might easily explain the rough and muddy water that is Loch Ness.

Although many people say they have seen Nessie, most scientists doubt that Nessie really exists. Even photographs of Nessie, some scientists believe, are probably optical illusions. "The Loch Ness monster has never been found and no one yet knows whether it is real or a hoax" (Loch 366), say researches for Natural History magazine. But the legend of Nessie has existed since the 500's, and it is not likely to die in the 1980's.

Works Cited

Chartwell, Thomas. Nessie of Loch Ness. New York: Morrow, 1986.

Gregory, William K. "The Loch Ness Monster." Natural History Jan. 1987: 130-131.

"Loch Ness." World Book Encyclopedia. 1986 ed.

Mason, Mary Moore. "Scotland's Elusive Nessie." Travel-Holiday July 1987: 94.

DIALOG file 47, item 0517409.

"The Search Continues at Loch Ness." Time 5 Oct. 1987: 24+.

Correlation of Curriculum to Texas Essential Elements for Library/Information Skills

Specific essential element skill numbers are referred to in the left hand column. The numbers are drawn from the State Board of Education Rule for Curriculum as designated in the Texas Education Agency's guide for Library/Information Skills for Quality Education.

GRADE SIX:

E.E. No.	Skills
75.22(3)(D)(iv)	use periodicals, the card catalog, and reference works to locate information;
75.22(3)(D)(iii)	use parts of a book: footnotes and appendices;
75.22(3)(C)	use comprehension skills to gain meaning from whatever is read or observed;
75.22(3)(A)(ii)	use context clues for word identification;
75.22(3)(B)(ii)	use context to understand the meaning of words;
75.22(3)(C)(i)	identify an implied main idea of a longer selection;
75.22(3)(C)(ii)	recall specific facts and details that support the main idea and/or conclusion;
75.22(3)(C)(iii) 75.25(4)(E)	arrange events in sequential order including time and degree of importance;
75.22(3)(C)(v)	summarize a selection;
75.22(3)(D)(vi)	adjust the method and rate of reading to the purpose and type of material including study-type reading;
75.22(3)(E)(iv)	select books for individual needs and interests;
75.22(1)	develop listening skills in attending to, responding to, and analyzing oral communication;
75.22(1)(D)	select from an oral presentation the information needed;

GRADE SEVEN:

F.E. No.	Skills
TEAMS (Reading #10)	identify the appropriate source to obtain information;
75.41(a)(4)(J); 75.41(c)(4)(C); 75.41(e)(4)(B);	use the card catalog or computer catalog and standard references;
75.48(a)(4)(A)	locate and gather information;
75.48(a)(4)(C)	translate information from one medium to another;
75.41(c)(4)(B); 75.41(e)(4)(C); TEAMS (Reading #8)	identify the form and function of various parts of a book;
75.41(a)(1)(A)	synthesize and organize information collected from several sources, generalize or summarize the information, make an outline, take notes from print and nonprint resources, make a bibliography;
75.41(a)(1)(D)	use direct quotation from written and oral sources;
75.41(c)(1)(A); 75.41(e)(1)(B); TEAMS (Reading #1)	apply contextual clues;
75.41(e)(3)(A); TEAMS (Reading #4)	select the directly stated or implied main idea in paragraphs and in longer selections;
75.41(a)(4)(B); 75.41(c)(3)(A); TEAMS (Reading #2 & #4)	identify and evaluate main idea statements and subordinate related details;
75.41(e)(3)(B); TEAMS (Reading #2)	recognize specific facts and details supporting the main idea;
75.41(a)(4)(C); 75.41(c)(3)(B); 75.41(e)(3)(C); TEAMS (Reading #3)	arrange details and events in sequential or simultaneous order;
75.48(a)(4)(F)	analyze information;
75.48(a)(4)(H)	synthesize information;

75.41(a)(4)(F); 75.41(c)(3)(D)	summarize and make generalizations;
74.51(c)(3)(I); 75.41(e)(3)(D); 75.48(a)(4)(G); TEAMS (Reading #7)	draw conclusions and make inferences;
75.41(a)(4)(I); 75.41(c)(4)(A)	follow written directions including substeps;
75.41(c)(4)(E)	vary rate of reading according to purpose;
75.41(c)(3)(G)	compare and contrast viewpoints on the same topic;
75.41(a)(5)(E)	take notes from an oral presentation;

GRADE EIGHT:

E.E. No.	Skills
75.41(b)(4)(K)	use the card catalog or computer catalog and standard references;
75.41(d)(4)(C)	locate, select, and organize information from periodials and a variety of reference materials;
75.41(a)(4)(A)	locate and gather information;
75.41(a)(4)(C)	translate information from one medium to another;
75.41(f)(4)(D)	use reference materials: dictionaries, encyclopedias, catalogs, almanacs, periodicals, newspapers;
75.41(b)(4)(I); 75.41(d)(4)(B); 75.41(f)(4)(B)	use parts of a book such as visual aids, chapter headings and subheadings, italics, color coding, marginal notes, footnotes, jacket summaries, appendices;
75.41(b)(4)(B); 75.41(d)(3)(A); 75.41(f)(3)(A)	identify implied main ideas and related details;
75.41(b)(4)(D); 75.41(d)(3)(F); 75.41(f)(3)(C)	identify the sequential order of events;
75.48(a)(4)(k)	sequence historical data information;
75.41(b)(4)(E); 75.41(d)(3)(G); 75.41(f)(3)(D); 75.48(a)(4)(M)	perceive cause and effect relationships;
75.48(a)(4)(F); 75.41(f)(3)(F)	analyze information and make judgments on the basis of information given;
75.48(a)(4)(H)	synthesize information
75.48(a)(4)(G)	draw conclusions;
75.41(d)(4)(A)	follow complex written directions;
75.41(d)(4)(E)	vary rate of reading according to purpose;
75.41(b)(5)(E)	take notes from an oral presentation;

GRADES 9-12:

E.E. No.	
75.61(1)(C) 75.61(4)(B) 75.61(4)(M) 75.61(4)(N)	recognize the variety of resources available in the LMC and choose the appropriate tool for the task;
75.61(4)(B) 75.61(4)(L) 75.61(4)(M) 75.61(4)(N)	use LMC resources in class and leisure activities;
75.61(1)(C)	find information on a variety of topics;
75.61(1)(G) 75.61(4)	process information;
75.61(1)	present creative ideas through student produced media using a combination of formats.